Trudeau makes eco-warrior his environment minister

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Justin Trudeau has angered Canada's oil industry by appointing environmentalists to head the ministries of natural resources and the environment.

In a cabinet reshuffle after last month's election, which gave the Liberal prime minister a third term, he appointed Steven Guilbeault, once called "the green Jesus of Montreal" and who previously worked for Greenpeace, as environment minister. In 2001 Guilbeault scaled Toronto's CN Tower, then the world's tallest building, to demand climate action.

Jonathan Wilkinson, who spent decades in the green technology sector before becoming Trudeau's environment minister, will oversee the oil sector as minister of natural resources.

The world's fourth-largest producer has struggled to get oil to market in recent years because of pipeline capacity problems. The pipelines are a target of climate activists, who have gone to court to shut them down. The logistical challenges sunk Alberta, known for big oil and small government, into a recession, for which many blamed Trudeau, 49, an avowed environmentalist.

Canada has pledged net-zero emissions by 2050, although it has failed to meet any of its emissions pledges so far.

"We need to make sure that the oil and gas industry stops increasing its emissions and starts reducing them, while supporting workers in these industries to help find new ways to work new jobs and new careers," Trudeau said on Tuesday.

His reshuffle elevated women to head the ministries of foreign affairs and defence, and moved Seamus O'Regan, who was liked by oil and gas producers, from natural resources to labour.

Jason Kenney, the Alberta premier, said the appointment of Guilbeault sent a "very problematic" message to the province. An unidentified oil and gas chief executive said: "[Trudeau's] Liberals are looking for a way to shut us down. [The] mood in Alberta is not good."

The Liberals hold 159 seats in parliament, short of the 170 required to pass legislation independently, making Trudeau dependent on smaller parties.

Graphic

Justin Trudeau is an avowed environmentalist

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